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IS CHRISTIANITY TRUE?

ANSWERS FROM HISTORY,
THE MONUMENTS, THE BIBLE, NATURE, EXPERI-
ENCE, AND GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY

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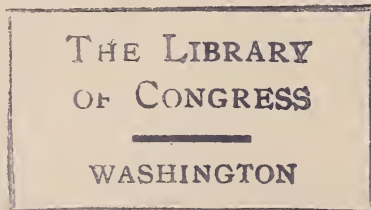
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

The able and suggestive papers in this little book, are from some of the most eminent scholars of the world. Their discussions respecting Christianity were originally issued in serial papers through the press of this country and Europe by the Irving Syndicate (now Maynard's Press Agency) and by its permission are re-issued after revision in this permanent form.

A new and important chapter has been added suggesting "Answers from the Growth of Christianity" to render the series more complete.



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IS CHRISTIANITY TRUE ?

CHAPTER I.

ANSWERS FROM HISTORY.

By PROF. W. GARDEN BLAIKIE, LL.D.

It is impossible, in a little space, to enter into the details of the historical testimony to Christianity. The more salient points, may be brought out under the *four* following divisions :

I. The testimony of secular history to the origin and early progress of Christianity.

II. Testimony to the existence and contents of the early records of Christianity, the books of the New Testament.

III. Testimony to the personal character, spirit, and aims of the early Christians.

IV. Testimony to the effect of Christianity on the intellectual, moral, and social life of the world.

I. TESTIMONY OF SECULAR HISTORY TO THE ORIGIN AND EARLY PROGRESS OF CHRISTIANITY.

§ 1. *Pagan Heralds.* It is interesting to

recall the fact that John the Baptist was not the only herald who announced the coming of Jesus Christ. The pagan world had its heralds too : men who had caught the echoes of Hebrew prophecy, probably from the Greek Septuagint version, and were preparing the world for the advent of a mighty King. We need but refer to the well-known passages in Suetonius and Tacitus. The former of these historians says that all over the East an old and steadfast opinion had spread abroad that at that time persons coming from Judæa would obtain the mastery of the world. And Tacitus bears the same testimony : "It was the persuasion of several persons, based on ancient priestly books, that at that very time the East would become powerful, and persons coming from Judæa would obtain the mastery of the world." Naturally men interpreted this of some great conqueror ; the idea of a monarch whose kingdom was not of this world had not entered their minds.

§ 2. *What Tacitus Says.* The main historical facts regarding Jesus Christ and the rise of his kingdom would be sufficiently established if there were no Christian evidence for them whatever. When Tacitus describes the persecution of the Christians at Rome in the reign of Nero he affirms the following facts : 1. The

founder of the Christian religion was Christ. 2. He lived in Judæa under the Procurator Pontius Pilate. 3. He was put to death in the reign of Tiberius. 4. Checked for a time by the death of Christ, the new religion broke out afresh, and among other places was carried to Rome. 5. A vast multitude of Christians who lived at Rome in Nero's time were apprehended and punished. 6. They suffered hideous tortures, aggravated by insult and mockery. 7. The tide of public sympathy turned in their favor, because they were held to have been punished not for crimes, nor out of regard to the public good, but to gratify the cruelty of the Emperor. It is true Tacitus held the Christians to have been worthy of death, but the only crime laid to their charge was "hatred to mankind"—a stupid and unfounded charge. And, though writing a generation after the time, Tacitus does not show that he had the faintest notion of the fact that this "execrable superstition," as he calls it, was really a power that was to transform the world—the greatest moral power the world had ever known. It was an instance of things hid from the wise and prudent, but revealed to babes.

§ 3. *What Pliny Says.* The well known testimony of Pliny the younger in his letter to the Emperor Trajan, asking guidance for deal-

ing with the Christians, at the end of the first century, is not less instructive. He bears emphatic testimony to the following facts: 1. That in Asia Minor the Christians were then numerous, important and well known. 2. They were of every age and of both sexes, living in town and country, and so numerous that in some cases the temples were deserted and the offerings to the gods no longer brought. 3. They were exposed to the most severe treatment—accused, punished, sometimes tortured; and while some drew back, the greater part remained inflexibly steadfast. 4. They were accustomed to meet early on the first day of the week, sing a hymn to Christ as God, and have a common meal, which they ate without any disorder. 5. At their meetings they bound themselves by an oath not to be guilty of theft, or robbery, or adultery, or breaking their word, or denying a pledge committed to them. Yet while recording all this, Pliny is at a loss whether or not he ought to punish them! They were the salt of the earth—the very best citizens the empire knew; yet such is the blinding force of prejudice that sagacious governors and emperors wondered what ought to be done with them!

§ 4. *What Gibbon Says.* Among later historians Edward Gibbon, himself an unbeliever,

in his famous "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," bore emphatic testimony both to the virtues of the Christians and the rapid spread of the Christian faith. "Here," said Gibbon, "is a remarkable phenomenon: Christianity, with all its humble origin, spread so rapidly and with such power that in the reign of Constantine it superseded all other religions, and became the religion of the empire." How was this? He goes at great length into the question, but while seeming to deal with it with great candor and historic insight, he commits two great blunders: First, he omits all inquiry into the *origin* of the new religion and confines himself wholly to its *progress*! He actually passes over the great inquiry, Who was Jesus Christ and whence came his extraordinary power? And then, in the second place, finding the Christians clothed with certain virtues and qualities, such as warm zeal, belief in the future life, belief in a supernatural presence, indifference to the world, and a strong moral *esprit de corps*, he concludes that it was quite natural for their religion to spread! But he does not inquire how they came to possess these virtues and qualities; and he either does not know, or he affects not to know, that the root of them all was faith in Jesus as the Son of God. But his testimony is valuable as showing that it was

a deep and powerful impress that was stamped by Jesus on his early followers, far deeper and more powerful than any natural causes could have produced.

§ 5. *Napoleon's View.* And what an unexampled marvel it was for a dead man, if he was only a man, to produce such an impression generation after generation! As Napoleon is reported to have said at St. Helena, "You speak of Cæsar, of Alexander, of their conquests, and of the enthusiasm which they kindled in the hearts of their soldiers; but can you conceive of a dead man making conquests with an army faithful and entirely devoted to his memory? My armies have forgotten me even while living, as the Carthaginian army forgot Hannibal. . . . Can you conceive of Cæsar as the eternal Emperor of the Roman senate, and from the depth of his mausoleum governing the empire, watching over the destinies of Rome? . . . Whose is the arm which for eighteen hundred years has protected the Church from so many storms, which have threatened to engulf it?" *

II. TESTIMONY OF SECULAR HISTORY TO THE STANDARD BOOKS OF CHRISTIANITY.

§ 6. *Of Celsus.* Here we will confine our-

* See Schaff's *Person of Christ*, pp. 243-4.

selves to a single pagan writer—the well-known Celsus, a vigorous controversialist against Christianity, in opposition to whom an able reply was written by the famous Origen, in the third century. The work of Celsus has perished, and all that we know about it is from the reply of Origen. There is a little doubt as to the precise time when he flourished; it must have been considerably earlier than Origen, who says he had been dead long before he undertook to answer him, and the common belief is that it was in the second century.

Now it so happens that out of the materials contained in the parts of his writings that have been preserved by Origen, an abridgment of the “Life of Christ” might be constructed, and indeed we may say has been constructed by more writers than one.

§ 7. *Lardner's View.* It was the boast of Celsus that “he knew everything”; meaning, it is supposed, everything pertaining to the affairs of the Christians. And Lardner* allows the claim; “for Celsus,” he says, “had read the books of Moses, and perhaps all the other books of the Old Testament. He had read, as it seems, all the books of the New Testament; but when he had done that, he supposed that

* *Credibility of Gospel History*, vol. ii. p. 263.

he needed not to give himself much trouble about any of them, excepting the historical books and particularly the Gospels." That he was well acquainted with the Gospel history of Jesus is apparent from his treatment of his life and teaching. For example, he objects to Jesus that he invited thieves, house-breakers, prisoners, sacrilegious persons and the like, thus forming a society of the worst men; showing that Celsus, like the scribes and Pharisees, was unable to appreciate a feature of Jesus that we now rank among his highest qualities—his profound regard for man as man, and his conviction that under the influence of divine love and grace the lost sheep might be recovered and the most degraded sinner restored. He accuses the Christians of having altered some things in the life of Jesus, but he does not specify any; and he gives no shadow of countenance to the German theories that were recently so rife, as to the late dates of the Gospels and the free and easy manner in which they were composed. There can be no reasonable doubt that in this man's days the books of the New Testament, at the very least the Gospels, existed as they are now.

§ 8. *Doddridge's Points.* The first who brought together the testimony of Celsus to Jesus Christ was the celebrated Dr. Philip

Doddridge. In answer to the question, "What can we learn from him concerning the real existence of the New Testament in his age, and the regard in which it was held by Christians?" Dr. Doddridge enumerates a great variety of particulars referred to by Celsus, summing up in these words: "Upon the whole, there are in Celsus about eighty quotations from the books of the New Testament, or references to them, of which Origen has taken notice. And whilst he argues from them sometimes in a very perverse and malicious manner, he still takes it for granted, as the foundation of his argument, that whatever absurdities could be fastened upon any words or actions of Christ recorded in the Evangelists, it would be a valid objection against Christianity; thereby in effect assuring us not only that such a book did really exist, but that it was universally received by Christians of those times as credible and divine. . . . He does not appear to have founded any objection against Christianity upon any of the spurious Gospels, Acts, or Revelations; which, considering his malice on the one hand, and the many foolish and exceptionable things to be found in these spurious books on the other, seems to be a good argument that he never saw them" [and that they did not exist].

Other writers, including Dr. John Leland of

Dublin, and Dr. Sherlock, have made a similar use of the testimony of Celsus.

Most of our evidence for the dates of the Gospels is drawn from Christian writers; but here is a pagan writer, who for the purpose of sneering at Jesus, rehearses much that is written concerning him, thus becoming against his will an important witness that he lived and taught and worked and died just as the books of the New Testament represent.

III. TESTIMONY OF SECULAR HISTORY TO THE CHARACTER, SPIRIT, AND AIMS OF THE EARLY CHRISTIANS.

We have already referred to the striking testimony of Pliny to the pure character of the Christians, as evinced in the remarkable oath which he ascribes to them. The atrocious rumors circulated by their foes as to their infamous character, and particularly their revolting orgies and drinking of human blood at their sacramental feasts, may be dismissed without a word, as belonging obviously to that class of calumnies which by their very absurdity refute themselves. It is not easy to find testimonies to the character of the Christians among the secular writers who remained pagans. When pagan writers did refer to them, it was usually with a pitiful reference to their superstition.

In their view (a very careless and foolish one) superstition alone explained Christianity. When they gave fair and deliberate attention to Christianity they could not resist its claims.

§ 9. *Justin the Martyr.* The case of the celebrated Justin Martyr is one in point. He began his search for truth as a philosopher. He longed for that wisdom which is the highest possession, the most valued by God, to whom indeed it alone leads and unites in, and with this view he first applied himself to the stoic philosophy. But from his teacher here he learned nothing of God; and so he applied to a peripatetic, who seemed, however, to care more for fees than for philosophy; so that here again he was disappointed. Next he consulted a Pythagorean; but by him he was told that without a long curriculum in various studies, including astronomy, geometry, music, etc., he could not reach the highest wisdom; and as he had not applied himself to these studies, he was disappointed again. Then he placed himself under a Platonist, and became charmed with what he now learned. He was delighted with the conception of the Incorporeal, and the contemplation of the Ideal gave wings to his mind; he seemed now on the fair way to his goal, but suddenly he underwent another change. One day, as he was walking quietly by the seaside,

in the hope of finally settling his opinion, he met an old man of a pleasant countenance, and with a gentle and dignified mien. Entering into conversation, this man told him of One who could guide him to God as none of the philosophers could, and of the books where the Divine wisdom was recorded. This was the turning point of Justin's life. But even before this he tells us he was impressed by the holy lives of Christians, and felt indignant at the scandals that were promulgated against them. "When I was delighting," he says, "in the doctrines of Plato, and heard the Christians slandered, and saw them fearless of death, and of all things which are counted fearful, I perceived that it was impossible that they could be living in wickedness and pleasure. For what sensual or intemperate man, or who that counts it good to feast on human flesh could welcome death, that he might be deprived of his enjoyments, and would not rather always continue the present life?" The Christian's contempt of death made a profound impression on Justin and many others; rather we should say the Christian's view of death as a conquered enemy, a warrior that had been disabled by Christ, who could now do no real harm to Christians, but on the contrary had for his commission to open for them the gates of glory.

IV. TESTIMONY OF SECULAR HISTORY TO THE EFFECTS OF CHRISTIANITY ON THE INTELLECTUAL, MORAL, AND SOCIAL LIFE OF THE WORLD.

The testimony of history on this point is rendered in a peculiar form.

§ 10. *Two Pictures.* The muse of history draws us two pictures : first the condition of the world before Christ came ; and next after it was penetrated by his religion. In so far as intellectual life was concerned, that was sufficiently vigorous in a certain class ; but that class consisted of the select few ; the *profanum vulgus* were intellectually contemptible ; it was under Christianity that the idea of universal education took root, because it was only under Christianity that the value and the capabilities of each individual soul came to be apprehended.

(1) *Roman Empire.* If we turn our view to the moral condition of the Roman Empire we shall find it simply appalling. Much of the Roman literature of the period is unreadable on account of its atrocious licentiousness. Family life was rotten to the core. Marriage was but a form ; its true spirit was hardly known. Women were so dissolute that the paramour was as common as the husband. Divorces created no blush ; even women of

noble families boasted of the number of their husbands. One satirist sneers at a woman who had had eight husbands in five autumns; another exposes one who when a law had been passed to restrain the practice of divorce, took the opportunity of being married to her tenth man! Of the licentious spectacles, the wanton pictures, the unnatural crimes, the dens of pollution that swarmed in ancient Rome at the dawn of Christianity, no picture could give an adequate conception. The very temples were worse than the brothels themselves; and the sacred name of religion was freely used, not to condemn, but to shield and vindicate the most abominable crimes.

(2) *Lecky's View*. Set against this picture the account which Lecky, skeptic though he is, gives of the change when the spirit of Christianity began to work: "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character who through all the ages of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love; has shown itself capable of acting on all ages, nations, temperaments and conditions; has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life

has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists. This has indeed been the well-spring of all that is best and purest in Christian life." ("Hist. of European Morals.")

It would take a long time to give even the briefest outline of the influence of Christianity on all the ramifications of domestic, social and national life, and to illustrate its ameliorating spirit in all the directions where its power has been felt. Such works as Uhlhorn's "Conflict of Christianity with Paganism" show the collision in operation, while Dr. Storrs' "Divine Origin" and Mr. Loring Brace's "Gesta Christi" exhibit the results.

§ 11. *Right use of this Argument.* Candor obliges us to say that this argument—argument from the effects of Christianity, needs to be presented with some discrimination. It is not fair to compare Paganism at its worst with Christianity at its best. There have been corruptions of Paganism as well as corruptions of Christianity; and while we must maintain that it was only a hideous travesty of Christianity that appeared in the days of Alexander Borgia, as compared with the pentecostal model in the days of the Apostles, it might be fairly contended on the other side that family life

in Rome in the first century was equally a travesty of its condition in early days when divorce was absolutely unknown. The argument for Christianity from its effects is unfortunately subject to not a few drawbacks, and cannot fairly be urged in the indiscriminate way in which it is sometimes advanced.

But secular history proclaims as with a trumpet that on the whole Christianity has proved an unspeakable blessing even to the secular life of the world; and we may fairly infer from its testimony that if Pessimism is to be driven off the field, and the old-old hope of a Paradise Regained is still to have a place in men's hearts, this can be expected only through the extension of Christ's kingdom, and the wider and deeper influence of his Spirit.

CHAPTER II.

ANSWERS FROM THE MONUMENTS.

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BY PROF. A. H. SAYCE, D.D., LL.D.

§ 12. *An Historical Religion.* Whatever view we may take of the relation between the Church and Holy Scripture, or whatever may be our idea of "inspiration" and "God's Word," all will agree that the Bible forms the background of Christian teaching and belief, the ultimate authority to which the Church makes its appeal. The writings of the New Testament are our earliest authority for the life of Christ and for the foundation and organization of the Church; abolish them, and the Christian Church would be like a house built upon the sand. They underlie our creeds and dogmas; they are to us what the Koran is to the Mohammedan or the Rig-Veda to the Brahmin of India.

Attempts indeed have been made in this century to prove that Christianity can survive even when deprived of all historical basis. But it is not what has been meant by Christianity in

any previous age of the world. Strauss, with the aid of the Tübingen critics, resolved Christianity into an "idea" of the Hegelian philosophy; but the eventual result was that Strauss ceased to call himself a Christian. Christianity is essentially a historical religion; and if we will not have a historical religion we must go elsewhere for our faith.

Professor Ramsay's archæological explorations in Asia Minor have led him to maintain the minute accuracy of the Book of Acts and its contemporaneousness with the events which it describes, as well as the genuine and authentic character of certain Epistles which it has been the fashion to dispute. He has shown that the first unprejudiced application of the results of modern archæological research by a master of archæological science to the writings of the New Testament is to vindicate their truthfulness and early date.

But the New Testament cannot be easily separated from its forerunner, the Old. Not only does the New Testament presuppose the Old, it presupposes also the historical credibility of the Old. The appeal to the Law and the Prophets would lose its weight if the Law were not what the Jews of the first century believed it to be, or if the Messiah of the prophets were not Jesus of Nazareth. The Law

formed the background of the Jewish Church, and therefore Christ came not to destroy it but to fulfill it. The patriarchs were not the mythical creations of a later age; otherwise how could our Lord have said "Before Abraham was, I am"?

§ 13. *Some Higher Criticism.* Under such circumstances it is incumbent on all those who believe in a historical Christianity to assure themselves whether the results of the "higher criticism" in regard to the Pentateuch are as triumphantly demonstrated as we are told they are. Is it true that the documents contained in it are separated by centuries from the events which they profess to record, and that the events themselves belong to the domain of legend and myth rather than of sober history?

This, then, is the pronouncement of the "higher criticism." The Pentateuch, along with the Book of Joshua, is a sort of literary hash; hardly a fragment of it was in existence before the days of Josiah; and the history which twenty centuries have believed they found in it is little more than a delusion and a fraud. Israel and its religion lose the background of their history; and the only part of the Old Testament Scriptures which was received by the Samaritans as of supernatural origin, and to which the Jewish Church at-

tached a special sanctity, is made later in date and inferior in veracity to a considerable part of the rest of the Old Testament canon.

Such revolutionary doctrines require a good deal of evidence to support them. But what do we actually find? Primarily an "analysis" by certain Western scholars in the nineteenth century of what are alleged to be the original elements of the text. The whole of the Pentateuch is sliced up into minute fragments, each of which is ticketed with a kind of algebraic symbol. The beginning of a verse is ascribed to one writer or "source," the middle of it to another, the end of it to a third. The critic knows exactly what each author wrote or pieced together, where "J" and "E" dovetail into one another, or where "P" breaks off and "Q" commences. That this should sometimes happen in the middle of a sentence is of little consequence. The critic is as cocksure of his analysis as he is of the approximate age to which each writer or redactor should be assigned. A "polychromatic edition of the Old Testament" is even being published in America, in which the "eminent biblical scholars of Europe and America" exhaust all the colors of the rainbow in the effort to represent the literary mosaic work of the ancient Hebrew books.

§ 14. *Why Extravagant Criticism.* Surely I am right in saying that such criticism is extravagant. Conceive of a similar "analysis" being applied to any English book, say of the Elizabethan era. Even in the case of a modern English work, like a novel of Besant and Rice, where we know that there is a dual authorship, the attempt to separate and distinguish between the two authors would be futile and impossible. And yet English is a language which we all speak and profess to know, and English literature is almost limitless in extent. The student of the Old Testament is in a very different position. The Hebrew literature that has come down to him is but a fragment of what once existed, and the interpretation of a good deal of it is doubtful. Our knowledge of the Hebrew language is in the highest degree imperfect; our Hebrew lexicons contain but a fraction of the words once possessed by it, and the meaning of many of the words which have been preserved, as well as of the idioms of the grammar, is merely a matter of conjecture.

§ 15. *Narrow Basis.* Moreover, it is the result of labors carried on in the closet, and by men who have little or no practical acquaintance with Oriental modes of thought. It is based also solely on the fragments of Israelit-

ish literature which are preserved in the Old Testament. The Old Testament itself has been made to pronounce its own condemnation without comparison with the records and literature of other nations in the ancient Eastern world. Such a procedure is obviously unscientific; the method of science is the method of comparison, and in order that our conclusions may be true it is necessary that the area of comparison should be as wide as possible. The critic whose horizon is limited by the fragment of the ancient Hebrew language contained in the Old Testament and the fragment of ancient Hebrew literature of which the Old Testament consists, is acting in the spirit rather of the mediæval rabbis than of modern men of science. He argues from what in logic would be called a single instance, and from a single instance we can draw no conclusions of permanent scientific value.

§ 16. *The Broader, Truer Basis.* While, however, the critic has thus been engaged in the work of demolishing the records of the past, the archæologist has been as actively employed in building them up again. The explorer, the excavator, and the decipherer have been working hand in hand and reconstructing the history of ancient civilization which the critic fancied he had swept away. The ancient cul-

tures of the East have been brought to light, and we have learnt that they were at once older, higher, and more literary than had ever been dreamed of, even in days before the critic appeared. We have learnt that the world in which Abraham and Moses lived and moved was a world of books and libraries, of readers and scribes, a world in which correspondence was continually carried on, from the banks of the Euphrates to those of the Nile, and in which the historian could find materials as plentiful and trustworthy as those that are contained in the modern newspaper.

§ 17. *Records in Egypt.* Egypt was the first to deliver up its dead. Under an almost rainless sky, where frost is unknown, and the sand seals up all that is entrusted to its keeping, nothing perishes except by the hand of man. The fragile papyrus, inscribed it may be five thousand years ago, is as fresh and legible as when its first possessor died. The painted chambers which Mr. Naville is disinterring at Der el-Bahari look as if the colors had been laid upon them but yesterday instead of two centuries before the exodus of the Israelites. Yet in Egypt, as far back as the monuments carry us, we find a highly-developed art, a highly-organized government and a highly-educated people. Books were multiplied, and if we

can trust the latest translation of the "Proverbs of Ptahhotep," the oldest existing book in the world, there were competitive examinations already in the age of the sixth Egyptian dynasty.

The proof presented by archæology declares, not only that Moses *could* have written the Pentateuch, but that it would have been something like a miracle if he had not done so. We have long known that the use of writing for literary purposes is immensely old in both Egypt and Babylonia. Egypt was emphatically a land of scribes and readers. Already, in the days of the Old Empire, the Egyptian hieroglyphs had developed into a cursive hand.

§ 18. *Tablets of Tel el-Amarna.* Thanks to the discovery of the cuneiform tablets of Tel el-Amarna in Upper Egypt, we now know that in the century before the exodus people were reading and writing and corresponding with one another throughout the civilized East, from the banks of the Euphrates to those of the Nile. And this was not all. The correspondence was carried on in the cuneiform characters, and for the most part in the language of Babylonia, necessitating the existence of schools where the foreign language and script could be taught and learned. What this means can be realized only by those who have studied the vast and

complicated Babylonia syllabary, with the two languages, Semitic and Sumerian, which a knowledge of it implies. The center of all this literary activity was Canaan. At one time that country had been under the influence and domination of Babylonia, but in the age of the Tel el-Amarna letters it had become an Egyptian province. A considerable number of the letters were written by Canaanites, and they show that a knowledge of reading and writing must have been widely spread throughout the land. Libraries and archive chambers existed like those of Babylonia, and editions of Babylonian literary works were made for them. In fact, Canaan, in the Mosaic age, like the countries which surrounded it, was fully as literary as was Europe in the time of the Renaissance.

Can we imagine that in the midst of all this literary knowledge and activity the Israelites alone should have remained illiterate? To suppose, as Dr. Neubauer, puts it, that they alone were asleep, while the rest of the world in which they lived was wide awake, is to conjure up a miracle greater than any of those which the traditional view of the Old Testament Scriptures calls upon us to believe. And if it is alleged that Moses did, indeed, write a Pentateuch, but that it has disappeared with the excep-

tion of a few tattered fragments in the Book of Exodus, we may reasonably ask what became of it, and why should the contemporaneous history it recorded have been superseded by the myths and legends of a later day? The "higher criticism" has asserted that there was no writing, and, therefore, no history, in Israel, before the age of Samuel; Oriental archæology, with no less emphasis, maintains that the Israelites must have known how to read and write before their settlement in Canaan.

§ 19. *Babylonian Monuments.* The revelations made to the archæologist by Egypt have been exceeded by those made to him by Babylon and Assyria. The antiquity of Babylon vies with that of Egypt. The earliest Babylonian monuments brought to Europe, and now in the Museum of the Louvre, testify to the existence of an ancient literary culture, as well as to an extensive commerce by sea and land. The diorite out of which the monuments are carved was imported from the distant land of Magan, the name under which Midian and the Peninsula of Sinai were denoted. Some of the spoils recently excavated at Niffar by the American expedition—the first fruits of which have been published by Prof. Hilprecht—are contemporaneous monuments of King Sargon of Accad, who lived as long ago as 3800

B. C. But art and literature already flourished in Chaldæa. One of the most beautiful specimens of Babylonian art is a seal which was engraved during his reign, and he was the founder of a great library, long famous in the annals of Babylonian literature. The rule of Sargon, however, was not limited to Babylonia. He established an empire which extended as far as the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. Four times did he march into "the land of the Amorites," and eventually succeeded in welding all Western Asia into "a single" kingdom. His son and successor pushed his conquests still further, and taking the road afterwards trodden by Chedor-laomer and his allies, overthrew the king of Magan, and so became master of the copper mines of Sinai.

§ 20. *Clay Books.* Fifteen hundred years later a Babylonian king still claims dominion over Syria and Palestine, and shortly afterwards Chedor-Maybug, the Elamite suzerain of Babylonia and the father of Eri-Aku of Larsa, in whom we must see the Arioch of Genesis, is called by his son "the father of the Amorite land." But the permanence and extent of Babylonian rule and influence in Western Asia are most clearly exhibited by the cuneiform tablets found in 1887 at Tel el-Amarna in Upper Egypt already noticed. They consist,

for the most part, of letters and despatches addressed by the kings and governors of Babylonia and Assyria, Mesopotamia and Cappadokia, Syria and Palestine, to the Pharaohs Amenôphis III. and Amenôphis IV. towards the close of the eighteenth dynasty, at a time when Palestine was a province of the Egyptian Empire. They show that the Babylonian language and the complicated and difficult writing of Babylonia had long been the common medium of literary intercourse throughout the West. Though Palestine was now an Egyptian province, its officials used the language and script of Babylonia even in their correspondence with the Pharaoh himself. What this means is evident. Not only does it point to a long-continued literary influence of Chaldæa upon Syria; it also shows that throughout Palestine there must have been schools where the foreign language and syllabary were taught and learned, as well as teachers and pupils, readers and scribes. Nay more: there must have been archive chambers in which the official correspondence was preserved, and libraries, like those of Babylonia and Assyria, where the literature on clay was stored up. That such was really the case we know from fragments of Babylonian clay-books which have been found at Tel el-Amarna, one of which has

been marked with red ink in order to facilitate its use by the Canaanitish student.

§ 21. *Babylonian Account of Creation.* The books in question contain old Babylonian legends, among them being an account of the creation of man and the introduction of death into the world. A broken copy of the beginning of it, written for the library of Nineveh some 800 years after the tablets of Tel el-Amarna had been buried under the soil, I found and translated several years ago. It was a full century before the Exodus that the city on whose site Tel el-Amarna stands was destroyed, and the tablets stored in it lost and forgotten, so that already before the birth of Moses, Babylonian literature and Babylonian legends of the origin of man and the world would have been known and studied in Canaan as well as on the banks of the Nile.

§ 22. *Babylonian Background to Genesis.* Now it has long been known that there is a Babylonian background to the earlier chapters of Genesis. The discovery of the Chaldæan account of the Deluge placed this fact in the clearest light. We have only to put the Chaldæan and the Biblical accounts side by side to see how closely they resemble one another. And the resemblance on the Biblical side is shared alike by the so-called "Jehovistic" and

“Elohistic” narratives which the critics detected in it. Before either “Jehovist” or “Elohist” wrote, the Babylonian story must have been well known.

On the other hand, there are certain differences between the Biblical and the Chaldæan accounts, which indicate that the former was composed in Palestine, and not in Babylonia. Thus, for example, the ship of the Chaldæan Noah is replaced in the Biblical narrative by an ark, as would be natural in a country where great rivers did not exist. We cannot, therefore, suppose that the Biblical account was derived from a Babylonian source in the period of the Captivity. And there is no other period when it is likely that Babylonian literature would have had an interest for a Hebrew writer, or even have been known to him until we go back to the pre-Mosaic age of Babylonian influence in Canaan. It was then that the old legends and traditions of Babylonia made their way into the West. And most of them were already very old even in their literary form. The story of the Deluge, for instance, discovered by Mr. George Smith, is an episode in an epic which was written before the second millennium B. C., and the episode itself was of earlier date. Such, then, is one of the lessons which the archæologist has learned

from the cuneiform tablets of Tel el-Amarna. The sources of what we may call the Babylonian portions of Genesis would have been found written on imperishable clay and stored in the libraries of Canaan long before the Israelites possessed themselves of the country.

§ 23. *An Early Literary Age.* But the most important lesson which the tablets have taught us, still remains to be considered. It is that the age of Exodus was an age of extreme *literary activity*, and that the Israelites and their leaders lived in the midst of educated and literary populations. Egypt, wherein they had sojourned so long, was preëminently a land of scribes and of writing. Everything was written upon: the walls of tombs and temples and houses, as well as the small objects of everyday use. Go where they might, letters and inscriptions stared them in the face. Canaan, the goal at which they aimed, was likewise a country of schools and libraries. It had absorbed the literary culture of Babylonia, and Kirjath-Sepher or "Booktown" was not the only city in it which contained a library or an archive chamber.

§ 24. *Literature and Moses in Midian.* Even in the desert the Israelites were surrounded by literary influences, if we may accept the conclusions of Dr. Glaser and Profes-

sor Hommel. Inscriptions recently found inform us that the authority of the civilized kingdoms of Yemen and Hadhramant in southern Arabia extended over the center and north of the Peninsula as far as the frontiers of Palestine and Edom, and in the neighborhood of Teima—the Tema of the Old Testament—the names of three of the kings of Ma'in or the Minæans have been met with. Glaser and Hommel urge weighty arguments in favor of the view that the kingdom of Ma'in flourished and fell before that of Saba, the Biblical Sheba, arose upon its ruins. If so, some of the numerous Minæan inscriptions which have been discovered will go back to an earlier age than that of Moses, since Saba was already dominant in Arabia in the days of the Assyrian kings Tiglath-Pileser III. and Sargon, while the Queen of Sheba visited Solomon. In this case a knowledge of alphabetic writing will have been carried to the very district which witnessed the wanderings of the Israelitish tribes, long before they arrived there.

But even if the Minæan texts prove to be of less antiquity than is now supposed, the archaeological evidences for the highly literary character of the age of Moses are sufficiently numerous and certain. To imagine that the Israelites alone were buried in a slumber of ignorance,

while the populations around them were busily engaged in reading and writing, is contrary to probability and common sense.

§ 25. *Pentateuch and the Records fit Each Other.* The documents upon which the Pentateuch rests are not of the late age to which the critic would refer them, but the narratives they record belong to history and not to romance. The Mosaic age was a literary one, and it was just the age when the legends and chronicles of Babylonia would be best known in the West. There was no other time when Canaan was a province of Egypt, and could therefore be described as the younger brother of Mizraim, or when a Canaanite proverb could have been current about the Babylonian hero Nimrod. Nor was there any other period, when a Hebrew writer was so likely to embody in his narrative the extract from the annals of Babylonia, which we find in the fourteenth chapter of Genesis, and which Assyrological research has so thoroughly verified. For the archæologist, at any rate, the Pentateuch is, as it were, rooted in the Mosaic age.

§ 26. *Answers Increasingly Satisfactory.* "The Bible is not intended to teach us science or history." That is very true, but whereas there is no necessary connection between its revelation and that of science, there is a very close

and living one between its contents and the facts of history. The discoveries of Oriental archæology are ever growing more numerous, more startling and more unexpected, and Oriental archæology declares with ever-increasing distinctness that the history which the "higher criticism" has demolished, is history after all. Our interpretation of it may have been erroneous. The demands we have made upon the narrators of it may have been impossible to fulfill, our conception of their mode of writing may have been derived from the habits of a printing and reviewing age, rather than from those of the ancient East, but the fault will be with us, not with the sacred books of Israel. To the assertion that these books are the fabrication of an age long subsequent to the events they profess to record, and that the events themselves are legendary and mythical, the Oriental archæologist returns an emphatic no.

In truth, those of us who have devoted our lives to the archæology of the ancient Oriental world have been forced back into the traditional position, though doubtless with a broader basis to stand upon and clearer views of the real signification of the Biblical text. Year by year, almost month by month, fresh discoveries are breaking in upon us, each more marvelous than the last, but all, as regards the Penta-

teuch, in favor of the old, rather than of the new, teaching. The story of the campaign of Chedor-laomer and his Babylonian allies against the Canaanitish princes has been fully confirmed, and now Mr. Pinches has found the name of Kudur-lagamar, or Chedor-laomer, as well as that of his ally, Tudghal, or Tidal. That Canaan was overrun by Babylonian arms and influence long before the age of Abraham, was already known. Prof. Hommel has discovered that Ine Sin, who ruled over Ur of the Chaldees centuries before the Hebrew patriarch was born there, captured the city of Zemar, in Phœnicia, while his daughter was high priestess of Anzan, or Elam and of Northern Syria. Contract tablets, drawn up and dated in the reigns of Eri-Aku, or Arioch of Ellasar, and of other Babylonian kings of the same period, contain Hebrew names which indicate that a Hebrew-speaking population was settled in Babylonia at the time. Nay, more, the names of the Hebrew patriarchs, Abram, Jacob (-el) and Joseph (-el) have actually been met with by Mr. Pinches among those of witnesses to the deeds, while the kings of the dynasty which was governing Ur in the age of Chedor-laomer and Arioch bear names which are not Babylonian, but which are at once Hebrew and South Arabian. What a commentary this is

upon the statement of Genesis that Eber begat two sons, one of whom was the ancestor of the Hebrew patriarchs, the other of the tribes of Southern Arabia !

§ 27. *Cumulative Testimony.* But Oriental archæology can go further than prove that Moses could, after all, have written the Pentateuch, and that the narratives contained in it are derived from documents contemporaneous with the events they record. It can further show that there is no one else so likely to have written it as the great leader and legislator of Israel, to whom after ages agreed in ascribing the written law. Let us take, for example, the tenth chapter of Genesis, in which the geography of the Oriental world is described. There we are told that Canaan was the brother of Mizraim, or Egypt. But it was only during the rule of the eighteenth and nineteenth Egyptian dynasties that Canaan obeyed the government of the Pharaohs. With the fall of the nineteenth dynasty it was separated from the monarchy on the Nile, not to be again united to it, except during the short space of years that followed the death of Josiah. After the Mosaic age we cannot conceive of a writer coupling Canaan and Egypt together.

If, then, I were to be asked if I believe that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, I should answer

that such a belief seems to me to involve considerably fewer difficulties than does the contrary belief of the "higher criticism." Of course such a belief does not necessarily mean that the Hebrew legislator wrote the Pentateuch precisely in the form in which we now possess it. It does not exclude the fact of later revisions or the addition of editorial notes. Jewish tradition avers that in its present form the Pentateuch has come to us from Ezra and the men of the great Synagogue, and the doubts that have been cast upon the tradition savor of hypercriticism. But I see no reason for denying that the Pentateuch is substantially the work of Moses.

And against this evidence of archæology what has the "higher criticism" to bring forward? Merely linguistic arguments. Lists of words and expressions have been compiled from the imperfect literature of an imperfectly known language, and interpreted by modern Europeans in accordance with certain documentary hypotheses. I have been a student of language and languages all my life, and the study has made me very skeptical as to the historical and literary conclusions that can be drawn from linguistic testimony alone. When we endeavor to extract other than linguistic conclusions from linguistic premises we generally go astray.

CHAPTER III.

ANSWERS FROM THE BOOK.

BY EDWIN W. RICE, D.D.

§ 28. *The Bible and Christianity.* The Bible gives the only authentic record of the founding and founder of the Christian religion. Yet Christianity did not have its origin in the Bible, for the New Testament was not completed until Christianity had spread over large portions of the then civilized world. Nor is the Bible a product of Christianity. The truths upon which the religion set forth in the Bible were founded, surely existed before God set up his kingdom on the earth, and before the call of Moses, or of Abram. For the religion of the Bible is essentially one, as the God of the Bible is one. Christianity, therefore, and the Book of Christianity are two distinct things, though both may claim the same author. Hence the one is a competent and credible witness in respect to the facts of the other.

What does the Book say in respect to Christianity?

The following *seven* groups of evidence will be sufficient to indicate the character and abundance of the entire testimony from the Book.

I. ON THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.

§ 29. *The Meaning of Christianity.* We must not forget that Christianity designates two distinct things : (1) the doctrines of the Christian religion ; and (2) the adherence to those doctrines. The term Christianity is not found in the Bible. The followers of Jesus Christ are there first called disciples, and later Christians, from which the system appears to have derived the title of Christianity. The disciples of Jesus were to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to all the human race. This command they received from Jesus, the immediate Founder of Christianity, and the most wonderful person in human history. His life and character will be considered presently.

Of Christianity as an organized society, that is of the formation of the first Christian Assembly, a specific account is given in the book of the Acts. Observe that Jesus did not during his ministry organize any formal society among his disciples. Choosing the twelve Apostles can scarcely be regarded as forming an organic body. Organized Christianity began after the crucifixion of the founder, when his disciples ral-

lied in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. The bodily presence and magnetism of their leader had gone. Yet they calmly went on to form an organization upon the instruction of this crucified Christ.

§ 30. *Organic Christianity.* The disciples gathered in Jerusalem as usual for prayer and worship. Suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty wind, strange forked tongues as of fire rested on the head of each disciple, they were filled with a strange power, and could speak, in tongues before unknown to them, the wonderful works of God.

Peter then explained the meaning of these wonders as a fulfilment of Hebrew prophecy. Jesus had risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven, of which facts the Apostles were eye-witnesses. And this gift of the Holy Spirit as promised by the ascending Jesus, was added proof of that fact. A crowd had gathered to behold the signs, and Peter urged them to repent, believe on this Jesus Christ, receive remission of sins and a like gift of the Holy Spirit. Three thousand complied, and that day joined the company of Jesus' disciples. From this time Christianity became a recognized organization in the world.

§ 31. *Early Trials.* It grew mightily after this glorious beginning at Jerusalem, and that

too in the face of ostracism of its members and a severe and bloody persecution. Some of the leaders attested the sincerity of their belief by suffering a cruel death rather than deny that Jesus was risen to be their Saviour. This served to increase while it purified the body of disciples. The persecution became so fierce at Jerusalem that it scattered the disciples, but they went everywhere proclaiming the "new way," so that it speedily spread over Palestine, and into many provinces of the Roman Empire, penetrating early to Rome itself.

The Apostles, Evangelists, and early disciples accompanied their teaching by many wonderful works, healing the sick, making the lame to walk, and raising the dead to attest the truth of their teaching. This power, like their teaching, they ascribed to Jesus Christ alone.

They proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah of the prophets and of the Old Testament, the glory of Israel, the true Immanuel, God with us. Thus while Christianity as a distinct organization was begun by the Apostles after the death of Jesus, it was an outgrowth and fruit of the Hebrew faith. It was the frequent theme of the most fervid of the Hebrew prophecies, and the complete fulfilment of them and of the symbols and sacrifices of the Hebrew law and worship.

Thus the Book testifies that in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son to found Christianity by the disciples he taught, building upon Jesus, and at first out of the forms and members of the older Hebrew religion, but afterward from all the world. These were not, however, two diverse religions, but essentially one in the author, spirit, and purpose of their worship.

II. IN THE REVELATION OF THE GOD OF CHRISTIANITY.

§ 32. *Begins in God.* Man everywhere seeks to know God. Only one Book in the world tells us with authority of his attributes and character. The so-called sacred books of the Oriental religions indeed profess to tell us something about God, or rather their gods, but their ideas are vague and misty, or coarse, debasing representations unworthy of a Supreme Being. Moreover, like the Greeks, they have a multitude of gods, all powerful, often selfish, cruel, lustful, indifferent to the miseries of mankind, and by the conduct and thoughts ascribed to them, tending to corrupt and debase their worshipers rather than to pity, reform, and uplift them. But the Book reveals the Christian's God as the beneficent ruler over all, the personal Helper for all his creatures, the loving,

forgiving Father, the compassionate Redeemer, the just Judge. He is infinite in his wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, a personal, invisible Spirit, dwelling in the heavens in unapproachable glory, such as no man may or can see, yet he has graciously condescended to manifest himself to us in Jesus Christ, and to dwell by the Holy Spirit in all those who believe on Jesus.

The Christian's God as revealed in the Book is in marked contrast with the gods of other great religions. Though infinitely pure and holy and just, he pities the gross and the impure, has compassion for the unjust, and while he will punish the wicked, he is nevertheless a God of love.

The sweetest and most exalted act of the Supreme Being, that which is so unlike man that we instantly think of it as divine, is this : "For God so loved the world, [in sin and disobedience] that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." What stronger evidence could be offered of the divine origin of Christianity ?

III. EVIDENCE FROM THE MORAL TEACHING OF THE BOOK.

The exalted character of the teaching of the

Bible, like its exalted purpose to save man from sin, is evidence of the divine origin of Christianity.

§ 33. *Offers a Remedy for Sin.* The Book proceeds upon the best known scientific methods, first to reveal the causes of human wretchedness, then to offer a sufficient remedy. The causes revealed in the Book are reasonable, and fully confirmed by the average experience of the race, so far as recorded or known. The misery of mankind does not spring from nature or her law, nor from some inexorable fate, nor from man's environment, but from disobedience, sin, moral guilt, of the man himself. This is the testimony of the Book ; it is likewise the testimony of the enlightened conscience of mankind, as evinced by the general, if not universal sense of guilt.

The Book offers a remedy for sin, a removal of guilt, a change that will make the heart of man right before God, and promises peace and the highest joy to the spirit of man now and forever. To those who accept the offer the Book gives instructions in respect to thought, speech, conduct, and manner of life here, the most exalted ever conceived of. The non-Christian scientist can find no delusion here. If he supposes that the miracles of Christianity are in part the exaggerations of enthusiasts, he

must confess there is no delusion in its exalted moral truths.

The chastity in conduct, the purity of thought, the love to our neighbor, the correcting of all wrong, the restitution for wrong done in the past, the command to love and pray for our enemies even, and above all the perfect consecration and spiritual worship of the perfectly holy, wise, and almighty, and loving, personal God, are teachings of this single Book, which place Christianity on a lofty, moral, and spiritual elevation never before conceived of by the human mind.

The recent study of comparative religions has brought out this feature of Christianity with an emphasis and argument that puts beyond question its lofty character as immeasurably above the teachings of all other religious systems.

IV. EVIDENCE FROM THE RIGHTEOUS CHARACTERS IN THE BOOK.

§ 34. *Messengers from God.* Not only are the teachings of the Book superior to merely human wisdom, the teachers claimed to be messengers from God. The Book represents them as authorized and guided of God in their teaching. It portrays the patriarchs, prophets, apostles and saints as intensely human, yet examples of

righteous and holy living often in striking contrast with the degenerate age in which they lived. And these lofty examples of godly living are found under a great variety of human experience and environment, and in every period of the history of the race to the end of the apostolic era. For it must not be overlooked that the patriarchal and Mosaic religion were but the seed and blade, of which Christianity is the full and perfected grain.

§ 35. *Sins of Holy Men.* Moreover the Book as faithfully records the errors and sins of the greatest of the prophets and apostles as it does those of the humblest, and as plainly as it notes the gross idolatry of the heathen. In this the Book reveals an exalted ideal unreached by any other book. It also represents these holy men as confessing their sins, and making the humiliating record of their bad acts, and of their sorrow in a way which compels all right-minded persons to admire their sincerity, and to have increased respect for the moral excellence of their character. The biographies of Abraham, Jacob, Elijah, David and Peter, as given in the Book, are marked illustrative of this statement.

The biographies of great men found in other books commonly either gloss over or glory in the daring, ambitious and bad acts of their heroes, and apologize for their sins, but the

Book of Christianity exposes the imperfections of holy men with plainness, and often with seeming severity. It would have us estimate character not by the low standard of man, but by the pure ideas of an all-wise and holy God. Upon this lofty ideal it declares all true Christianity is founded, and to this type must it bring all its disciples.

V. EVIDENCE FROM THE ONE PERFECT EXAMPLE
IN THE BOOK.

§ 36. *Jesus, the Great Teacher.* But the Book sets before us one perfect, faultless character, the person of Jesus Christ. He is the Great Teacher, the complete Saviour of man, the divine Founder of the Christian system. What does the Book claim for this unique Person? A few only of the remarkable characteristics need to be noticed to indicate the excellence and absolute perfection of this being. Among other attributes it declares:

(1) That Jesus knew and taught absolute truth. He was not merely *a* light, but *the* light of the world. He set up a perfect, an absolute standard of truth. He taught as one having authority, the authority of the Author of all truth. There was no defect in the matter or the manner of his teaching.

(2) That Jesus is the one perfect example for

all the world to imitate. The claim to be a perfect teacher is one that has never been accorded by mankind to any except Jesus. But high as that claim is, the claim to be a perfect exemplar, the moral and spiritual model for the world is far higher. As he did the things that pleased the Father, so all disciples must imitate Jesus. They are commanded to follow Christ in all things, in piety, in benevolence, in prayer, in loving enemies, in compassion, in living for others and for God.

(3) That Jesus was sinless and one with God, the Father. A perfect exemplar of humanity may not necessarily be perfectly sinless. One might exhibit a perfect model of mankind, though not perfectly sinless, as Mark Hopkins accurately pointed out in his Lowell Lectures. But Jesus "did no sin"; he was "Holy, guileless, undefiled, separated from sinners." He claimed to be one with God the Father in a peculiar sense, which he knew the Jews thought to be blasphemy if it was not true.

(4) That all must come to him, believe on him, if they would be saved from sin, and have eternal spiritual life. "In none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved."

(5) That he raised the dead, and that he said

he would himself rise from the dead, and that he did so rise the third day after he died on the cross, and that he repeatedly appeared to many competent witnesses, and to over five hundred persons at one time.

(6) That he ascended to heaven, in the sight of a company of his disciples, having commanded them to preach his Gospel to all nations, and promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth, and to bring his teaching to their remembrance.

(7) That in Christ all the dead should be raised up, and that he would be the final Judge of all mankind.

§ 37. *Jesus, the Supreme Character.* These claims are extraordinary, and until his day were never conceived by the wildest and most extravagant enthusiast. Is his character as portrayed in the Book consistent with these unprecedented claims? Wise and acute minds in all fields of science, literature, philosophy, and learning, avowed believers, non-believers, and disbelievers in the Christian faith have alike testified to the superiority of the character and teachings of Jesus Christ.

The exalted claims of Jesus and of the Book concerning him must be accounted for. To say that he was a myth, a creation of the imagination, is to deny and defy an accumulation

of testimony as weighty and convincing as can be offered in support of any great event in human history. To say that he was not what he claimed to be, is to charge either that he was an imposter or self-deceived. Now to say that he was a willful deceiver, an impostor, is to charge that he was a bad, a wicked man. But how could a wicked person teach or conceive of such moral and spiritual truths as Jesus speaks, and do all the good and beneficent acts that Jesus did? The teachings and life of Jesus are alike utterly inexplicable on this theory. To say that he was deluded, is to assert that he was not morally nor spiritually sane. His wise, holy, spotless character refutes this delusion. This theory is also utterly untenable in the face of his lofty spiritual teachings and life, which commend themselves to the universal consciousness of mankind, not alone because of their marvelous elevation and perfection of moral tone, but also for their perfect rectitude and reasonableness.

§ 38. *What Great Thinkers Say.* Benjamin Franklin, the prophet of common sense, says to a young man, "My advice to you is that you cultivate an acquaintance with and a firm belief in the Holy Scriptures." "I think Christ's system of morals and religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is ever

likely to see." John Stuart Mill, the English doubter and metaphysician, speaks of Jesus as charged with a "special, express, and unique mission from God, to lead mankind to truth and virtue," and calls him "the ideal representative and guide of humanity." ("Essays," p. 254.) Goethe, the greatest name in German literature calls Christ "the Divine Man," "the Holy One," and says of the Book, "It is a belief in the Bible, which has served as the guide of my moral and literary life." Ralph Waldo Emerson, of the Concord school of "advanced" philosophy, wrote: "Jesus is the most perfect of all men that have yet appeared." Matthew Arnold finds, "the true God is and must be pre-eminently the God of the Bible, the eternal who makes for righteousness, from whom Jesus came forth, and whose spirit governs the course of humanity." Jean Paul Richter, the master of German humorists, declares of Jesus: "He is the purest among the mighty, the mightiest among the pure, who with his pierced hands has raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channel, and still continues to rule and guide the ages." Channing, the leader of American Unitarianism, in a sermon on the "imitableness of Christ," says: "I believe Jesus Christ to be more than a human being. In truth,

all Christians so believe him." And in another discourse on the character of Christ, he closes an eloquent description thus: "The character of Jesus is not a fiction; he was what he claimed to be, and what his followers attested. Nor is this all. Jesus not only was, he is still, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. He exists now; he has entered that heaven to which he always looked forward on earth. There he lives and reigns." Herder, the versatile poet, philosopher, and essayist of Germany, declares: "Jesus must be looked upon as the first real fountain of purity, freedom, and salvation to the world."

Rousseau, the prophet of French Deism was a genius though corrupt, a philosopher though capricious, and false to the principles he upheld as right. Rousseau, in his "Emile," says: "I will confess to you that the majesty of the Scriptures strikes me with admiration. . . . Is it possible that a book at once so simple and sublime should be merely the work of man? Is it possible that the sacred personage whose history it contains, should be himself a mere man? Do we find that he assumed the air of an enthusiast or ambitious sectary? . . . When Plato described his imaginary good man loaded with all the shame of guilt, yet meriting the highest rewards of virtue, he describes exactly

the character of Jesus Christ. . . . Where could Jesus learn, among his compatriots, that pure and sublime morality of which he only hath given us both precept and example? . . . Socrates, in receiving the cup of poison, blessed, indeed, the weeping executioner who administered it; but Jesus, in the midst of excruciating tortures, prayed for his merciless tormentors. Yes, if the life and death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of God."

Confucius claimed to be a sage, drawing his wisdom from human sources. As a religious teacher he did not claim a divine mission. Buddha was a philanthropist, a moral reformer; his religious doctrines were largely negative precepts. Socrates indeed believed that he was entrusted with some divine mission, and was inwardly guided by the gods. But in this respect he claimed nothing more for himself than he accorded to others. He claimed no pre-eminent or absolute authority, no clear knowledge of the future life; he left no command for men to love, obey, and believe on him.

If space permitted, these positions could be further confirmed by cumulative evidence that has not been successfully questioned.

VI. EVIDENCE FROM THE HIGH STANDARD OF THE BOOK.

§ 39. *What Christianity Requires.* There is often a very wide difference between the Christianity seen in the world and the Christianity set forth in the Book. The latter not only presents the perfect character Jesus Christ, at once the "Son of man" and the "Son of God," but it calls on all men to conform to his standard of character. It admits that men do not do it, and that by their unaided powers cannot do it, yet it insists that they shall do it. To this end it declares that Jesus is the Saviour of all those who believe on him, and that he will take away the sense of guilt for past sin. Divine guidance is promised to all who thus accept Jesus as a Saviour, and conform their conduct, speech and thought to his standard.

Furthermore, they are required to be perfect, as God the Father is perfect. This alone is the standard of Christianity. The three foremost nations of the world to-day are nominally Christian. They exhibit the highest attainments in knowledge, in the industrial arts, in wealth and social refinements, and in free and enlightened government, that the human race has ever reached.

§ 40. *How Standard Known.* Yet the Chris-

tianity exhibited in these Christian nations cannot be taken as the standard. Nor can that exemplified by any of the great divisions of the Christian Church be counted the true standard. The practical Christianity of professed Christians at no period since its beginning has been held up by Christians themselves as the ideal, or as realizing the high standard portrayed in the Book. Therefore Christianity must not be judged solely by its professed adherents in the world. The members of a local Christian Church in any community are not to be taken as the true standard. Everywhere the Christianity of the Book is held up as the standard, and sincere Christians on every hand confess that they do not attain to the high character required by their text book.

Thus again does the Book testify, as it were unconsciously, to the superhuman origin of the Christian system.

VII. EVIDENCE FROM THE INFLUENCE OF THE BOOK.

§ 41. *Effect on the Individual.* While the standard of Christianity presented in the Book is vastly above the average life and character of its professed followers, it is not one that destroys all hope of attaining to it. It rather stimulates and inspires its disciples to unwonted

exertions to reach the standard. Though often overcome by temptations, and pained by failures, they readily renew their efforts with fresh zeal, with greater devotion, and with sacrifices that run through a lifetime of struggle, prayer, and hope, that is a perfect amazement to the worldly. This is the experience of the individual. That of the Church universal, the great body of Christianity, is on the same line. The widespread influence of the Book for Christianity may be gauged by the demand for the Book. It is safe to say that the number of copies of the Book and portions of the Book put in circulation last year exceeded in number the copies of all the sacred books of all the other great religions that have been put in circulation since the beginning of the human race. And the demand is increasing. The copies of the Christian Scriptures circulated in non-Christian lands during this century, are said to exceed in number all that were circulated from Moses to Martin Luther. Christianity is destined to cover the world.

§ 42. *Effect on Nations.* The nations that most closely follow the precepts of the Book make the greatest progress in the arts, in literature, in refinement, in good society, in gaining the comforts of life, in short, the highest known civilization. Wherever the Book goes Chris-

tianity springs up, and in its train light displaces darkness, it gives civil and intellectual freedom, the dormant mind is roused, the moral sense is purified, the dead conscience is quickened, the gnarled and twisted ideas of right are made straight, the coarse and brutal are refined, the secretly vicious and impure have the searchlight of truth turned upon their hearts, life and property become safe or more secure, the tone of society is elevated, home on earth made sweeter, the sting of death removed, and a blessed hope made to cast its light beyond the tomb, and reveal the transcendent glories of a blissful eternal home in heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

ANSWERS FROM NATURE.

BY PROF. SIR J. WILLIAM DAWSON, F. R. S., LL. D.

§ 43. *Natural and Revealed Religion.* Religion has been regarded as divisible into that which is natural and that which is revealed. This distinction relates not so much to the matter of religion as to its supposed sources. In other and more practical respects natural and revealed religion coincide, or may be identical. Christianity, in the more precise sense of the term, must be regarded as a product of Revelation. It might therefore, at first sight, be supposed to have few if any relations to the religion which may be learned from nature; and its teachings are not infrequently spoken of by both its friends and enemies as belonging to what they term the supernatural. Yet if Christianity is the true religion, if its God is the Creator of the universe and the source of its laws, and if man, the object of religion, is himself a part of nature, there must be some points of alliance between the Christian re-

ligion and the whole cosmos or arranged system of things, which must on this supposition be a product of the same Divine mind with Christianity itself. Milton asks—

“What if earth

Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein

Each to the other like more than on earth is thought?”

And good and great men of all the Christian centuries have occupied themselves with this question, and have endeavored to discover points of contact between the teachings of nature and those of the Lord from heaven.

§ 44. *Some Fundamental Truths.* We cannot, it is true, suppose that nature alone could have given us all that we have in Christianity. We may merely expect to find in nature certain fundamental truths common to natural religion and to Christianity, and we may also find indications that man and the world in which he lives are in need of a plan of salvation such as Christ proposes. Anything of this kind that may be fairly deducible from nature will have a certain evidential value, as showing an agreement between nature and Revelation, and an analogy between what we regard as Divine methods in nature and in grace. The validity of this for our present purpose, will however depend on the answer to the questions

whether the New Testament recognizes the value of the testimony of nature, and whether nature, as understood and interpreted by modern science, affords evidence of a Divine Creator. In taking thus the New Testament as the authoritative exponent of Christianity, and science as the legitimate interpreter of nature, we shall be relieved on the one hand from all the superstitious fancies which have clustered around nature, and on the other from those accretions to Christian faith and practice which are not based on the Bible. This will also relieve us from crude questions as to the "reconciliation" of Christianity with science.

§ 45. *Nature a Competent Witness.* Does the New Testament then give any countenance or aid to such inquiries? Christ himself professes to be the only revealer of God. He is emphatically the "Word" of God. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*" (John 1:18). This declaration of God is revelation in the highest sense as distinct from merely natural religion. It is emphatically with reference to this revelation that it is said that no man can come to God unless he believes that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Hebrews 11:6). Yet it is admitted

that in this revelation of and belief in God nature may claim some humble share. Paul informs us that "the invisible things of him [God] since the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, *even* his everlasting power and divinity" (Romans 1 : 20). Jesus himself adduces the testimony of the sparrows, the ravens, and the flowers of the field in favor of the love of God to man. The great Revealer calls on these humble creatures to join with him in witnessing not only to the existence but to the attributes of God. Thus the Divine Revealer and the New Testament revelation permit us to appeal to nature in corroboration of their own declaration of him whom no man hath seen. Thus guided by Jesus and his Apostle Paul, we may turn to Nature and question it; but in doing so we shall find the field becoming so large that we shall be able to notice only a few selected illustrations, the first of which must be the paramount one of the evidence afforded by the objects and energies of the material world to the being and principal attributes of the Creator.

§ 46. *A Creator.* All students of nature are probably prepared to admit that there must be a First Cause of the universe and its phenomena. Every individual effect so far as we can ascer-

tain must have an adequate cause or causes, and we cannot hold this rationally with respect to details without admitting that there must have been a primary cause for the whole. The phenomena of the universe cannot possibly be causeless or fortuitous in the first instance. This doctrine of a First Cause is necessary to any rational understanding of material nature, quite as much as it is necessary to religion, or to any comprehension of the spiritual world. But it may be said that the First Cause being itself an ultimate conception, must be unknowable except in regard to the fact of existence.

This is the position of the agnostic. The pantheist may hold that the First Cause is identical with the sum of the different energies and materials manifested by natural phenomena. But is either position tenable? The First Cause being the origin of all phenomena must be antecedent to them or self-existent. The First Cause must belong to that unseen universe which lies beyond all phenomena. The First Cause must be potent to produce all existing effects, therefore so far as our comprehension extends, omnipotent. The First Cause must include potentially all the complicated laws and energies of nature and their interactions, and all the manifestations of life and mind; and we cannot imagine this without

falling back on the idea of an infinitely wise and knowing Intelligence, free, independent, and one. Thus though we cannot know the essence of the First Cause, we can know something of his power and of his divine wisdom and knowledge. We can, in short, know what Paul affirms we can learn from nature, namely, the power and divinity of its Author, leading us to the Christian conception of a self-existent, all-powerful, wise and, personal God.* It thus appears that nature has no place for agnosticism or pantheism. It is theistic, and the sooner this is admitted on all hands the better for the interests both of science and religion.

§ 47. *The Creator's Care.* But does God care for us? or has he left us simply to the drift of material forces? The Old Testament prophet, looking up to the starry sky in its immensity, exclaims "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?"† But he knows that God is mindful, and still more that he has delegated to man dominion over the earth. Jesus, as we have seen, prefers to deduce this truth from the little things of earth. If these are cared for by God, how much more man? To Jesus Christ nature, though in some sense out of harmony with fallen man, as we shall

* Romans 1 : 20.

† Psalm 8 : 4. *et seq.*

see in the sequel, is not a mere pessimistic struggle for existence, a battle of tooth and claw and selfish cunning. It has a wealth of happy enjoyment, bearing witness to the love of God, and *a fortiori* God must care for man made in his own image, though he must leave him as a free and responsible agent to wreck his own happiness if he is so perverse as to do so, in spite of the natural checks which have been placed in his way. Christ weeps over the blind perversity of men, and some of his teachings as to nature have a reflex bearing of wonderful power, which escapes those who are not like him full of nature and its Maker. The flowers of the field, he tells us, are arrayed more superbly than Solomon in all his glory. Yet he who so arrays these beautiful and precious things permits man to cut them down and to throw their poor withered remains into his oven to bake his bread. Surely man is the spoiled child of the Creator, allowed by an over-indulgent father to destroy the valuable things which he cannot appreciate, or which his own misconduct has rendered it necessary for him to apply to purposes not intended by the Maker either of man or of the lower things which he so misuses. Surely it is the same indulgent Father who causes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and who provides a

Saviour for the unworthy and the disobedient, though he is also a rewarder of those who diligently seek him and will not prevent the penalties of law whether physical or moral from falling on the reckless and impenitent. This is surely a latent gospel in Nature, which has always been proclaimed by it, though often to heedless ears, and which required the infinite knowledge and love of Jesus to interpret clearly to us. No doubt this gospel, like that of Christianity itself, is turned into gall and bitterness by modern pessimistic advocates of the mere struggle for existence; but to rightly-constituted minds Christ's interpretation is better, as it is also more happy and hopeful.

§ 48. *The Spiritual in Nature.* There are however some existences in nature, those energies which actuate material things without being themselves properly material, which have always been considered as bringing us near to the spiritual. It is scarcely necessary to say how constantly these energies, and especially that of light, have been employed in the old natural religions, and also in the Bible to shadow forth and represent the attributes of God. Very specially is this the case with him who is the "true light," "the light to lighten the Gentiles," the light that coming into the world shines on every man (Luke 2 : 32 ;

John 1 : 9). It would be easy to show that modern discoveries as to these energies of nature make them, even more eminently than in former times, types and illustrations of divinity, and of God's mercy to man in Christ.

§ 49. *Creator above Space and Time.* Even time and space, those inscrutable things, yet so essential to our thought and action, and which, themselves infinite, limit us on every side, can tell us much of God and of the Mediator between God and man. God himself inhabits eternity, and space sets no bounds to him whom even the heaven of heavens cannot contain. We may know the lapse of time by the sequence of our own thoughts, but we can measure it only by the motion of material things, and to us its duration is eternal. In space we and all things exist. We can measure portions of it by the dimensions and distances of objects; but its extension is infinite. Thus, while existing in time and space, both are to us inscrutable. But God can be under no such limitations. In his thought there is no necessary sequence, for all time is ever present. In like manner he must fill all space. To him ages and moments are alike, and the immense and the minute equally within his cognizance. Creation and the establishment of natural law are not, as many seem to suppose, extensions

of his being, but voluntary limitations in time and space of his infinite power. Want of attention to this lies at the foundation of much of the superficial infidelity of our time. Men reason as if God should be in the likeness of the things he has made, whereas in relation to time and space he is infinitely beyond them. Even man, though in the image and likeness of God, is but a finite being. Thus, while on the one hand, man rises immeasurably above other animals, on the other he is separated by an impassable barrier from God. Hence the need of God's revealing himself to us, and of a Mediator connecting divinity with humanity, himself partaking of and comprehending the divine nature, yet sharing the emotions and thinking the thoughts of man. By John and Paul this great mystery of a divine and human Mediator is put forward as a necessity, even irrespective of the complications arising from sin and from the fall, a view perhaps too seldom thought of in connection with the New Testament idea of the Word of God, which in the view of the Apostle John is a primary doctrine underlying Christianity. We must now turn to the position of man himself relatively to God and the material universe.

§ 50. *Man's Belief in God.* Man is a part of nature, conforming to its laws, not merely

in his bodily organism, but in his ordinary instincts, feelings, and mental powers. But in addition to this, he has higher or spiritual intuitions, which though in one sense they are a part of the cosmos, in another are links of connection with the unseen universe beyond. These higher instincts of man have a right to be regarded like the lower instincts of other animals, as emanations from the mind of the Creator. They are a testimony within man to his alliance with the moral and spiritual world, and if he does not obey them as implicitly as the lower creatures obey their instinctive tendencies, this is because he has been endowed with responsibility and freedom of will. Of these higher intuitions one is the belief in a future state of existence, which may be termed the instinct of immortality. This would seem to have been present in the rude peoples of the antediluvian stone age, and has been handed down to every race of men. The belief in God and immortality go together, for if there is a future life, there must be a Divine power to govern and protect it. In proof of this we can appeal to the fact that practically all men at all periods of the world's history have had some belief in a future state and in God or gods. This is as much a part of human nature as the instincts of a bee or a beaver are of

theirs. Now it is declared to be a special part of the religion of Christ to reveal God, and to bring life and immortality to light; not to create these ideas, but to revive them, to bring them from obscurity into light. It may further be affirmed that before Christ came the want of such a mission had been universally felt. Why else has every primitive religion had its mediators and intercessors, whether in the form of subordinate gods, or imaginary spiritual beings, or of heavenly luminaries, or of deceased saints and heroes, or even of lower animals, and other natural objects which the Creator is supposed to love and to be pleased with those who cherish them. These simple expedients of natural or mythical religion may be superstitions, but they proclaim man's felt need of a mediatorial system, as well as his sense of demerit and cry for Divine mercy.

§ 51. *Primitive Man and a Fall.* Questions of this kind lead to another phase of the coincidences of nature and Christianity. The earliest men known to us by actual remains seem to have been rude hunters inventing weapons to destroy wild animals, and turning the same weapons against one another. But this could not have been the earliest estate of man. Physiology assures us that as a being unarmed, naked, frugivorous, naturally harm-

less he must have originated in some favored spot where he needed neither clothing nor shelter, where the spontaneous products of nature would supply his wants, and where he would be free from the attacks of formidable beasts of prey. How then did he become a hunter and a savage, inhabiting rigorous climates, clothing himself with skins, and wantonly destroying his fellow-men in a manner unexampled among the lower animals? Whatever the cause, archæology here proclaims "a fall of man," and geology assures us that it must have occurred before that last great continental submergence which divides the early human period into two parts, and has impressed itself on the traditions of all races of men as the historical deluge *—the great selecting process of the Creator whereby it happened to man as it had happened to other animals in former geological ages that the unfit were weeded out and a few of the fittest allowed to survive. Even those evolutionary theories which derive man from a harmless frugivorous ape-like creature cannot rationally deny this great physical and moral fall. But we know that the state of primitive innocence and the

*I have fully discussed these subjects in my work "Modern Science in Bible Lands," and in a volume entitled "The Meeting-place of Geology and History."

fall are the oldest doctrines of revealed religion, and primary historical facts in the Christian system.

§ 52. *Sacrifice and Suffering.* Nature also proclaims that doctrine of sacrifice and vicarious suffering which is of the essence of Christianity. All organic nature is under the inexorable law of action and reaction. No effect can be produced without a corresponding expenditure of force and loss of substance. We cannot raise a fallen child from the ground without an expenditure of muscular power equal to the weight raised. We cannot help a needy person without a proportionate outlay of our own wealth. Christ who offers to raise the whole mass of fallen humanity and to enrich it with infinite treasures, cannot evade this law, but must become poor that we may become rich, must sacrifice himself that we may be saved. Thus it is evident that the Christian doctrine of vicarious suffering is also a law of nature, and is even shadowed forth in the sacrifices made by animals in the interest of their progeny—that altruism or otherishness which appears in the lower field of instinctive nature just as in the higher sphere of human salvation. This aspect of Christianity is seen in the earliest biblical intimation of a Saviour, for he who bruises the serpent's head must feel its fangs in his heel

(Genesis 3 : 15). It appears in various forms in some of the earliest religions, whether derived from nature or primitive revelations ; and in our own time it has, singularly enough, been received as a new doctrine in amendment of the Darwinian doctrine of the struggle for existence. It fits badly enough with the Darwinian evolution, but can be seen in natural science as well as in the New Testament.

§ 53. *Creator, the Redeemer.* Here I would mention an aspect of Christianity which seems to me to harmonize both with the need of a mediator and the demands of sacrifice. Christ claims pre-existence—"Before Abraham was, I am" (John 8 : 58). John makes the same claim on his behalf, "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1 : 1). He adds the further statement that Christ is the Creator. Paul puts forth the same great claim, "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth" (Colossians 1 : 16). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes the same ground, "By whom also he made the worlds," more literally "constituted the ages" of the making of this world (Hebrews 1 : 2). Whatever view may be taken by the theologians as to these ascriptions of divinity and creative power to the Christ, there can be no doubt that they represent his own teaching and that of the

Apostles, and that they harmonize with his interest in the things that have been made and his appeal to them as witnesses to his doctrine, and that they are in correspondence with the position of one who proposes to bear the whole burden of human depravity, and to reinstate nature itself in that happy equilibrium which has been disturbed by the sin and cruelty of man (Romans 8 : 12).

§ 54. *Man's Limited Capacity to Know the Spiritual.* It would follow from this that the questions sometimes raised respecting the extent of the knowledge of Jesus Christ are frivolous and misleading. We look at nature from the side of experiment and observation. He evidently regarded it from the standpoint of divine origination. The difference between him and the scientific student of nature is similar to that between the machinist who has planned and constructed a complicated machine, and the stranger who entering from without endeavors to arrive at a comprehension of it from the study of its parts. Christ looks at nature from the standpoint of the heavenly and the eternal, we from that of the seen and temporal. We cannot gauge his heavenly comprehension of nature by our earthly standards. If we study his utterances as recorded in the Gospels, we shall see that he views things

from a position of his own, and through a medium different from the atmosphere of this world. His difficulty appears to be to convey heavenly thoughts to us through the imperfect language in which we speak of earthly things. All the questions darkest to our philosophy are plain to him, and he is equally at home in dealing with the flowers of the field and the sparrows on the housetops, or with the Old Testament prophets, or the angels of heaven, or the plans of Satan, or the counsels of God. If any one doubts this, let him take his concordance of the New Testament and follow the teaching of Christ in the Gospels respecting that mysterious energy which we call life, and about the very existence of which superficial thinkers are wrangling in our own time. He will see that to Jesus the term has a vast and far-reaching significance, extending from its lowest manifestations on earth into heaven and eternity, and connecting vitality in all its forms with that "life and immortality" which he came to bring clearly into light.

To sum up these desultory thoughts on a great theme, the evidential value of nature in relation to Christianity may be included under the following statements:

§ 55. *Books of Revelation and Nature Agree.* Nature presents such analogies to the

scheme of redemption as to point conclusively to a common authorship, and therefore to the divine origin of both ; and to a common end in which the natural and spiritual worlds and the domains of reason and faith will be peacefully united in the new heavens and new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and in which all the difficulties that now perplex so many thinkers will be happily and forever settled.

Nature and man are permeated throughout with an unrest and earnest striving after better things which call for the intervention of a higher, even a heavenly, power for the final salvation of the world. Christianity supplies this need, and thus becomes the keystone and complement of nature, furnishing that deliverance from evil which all social and political systems and all science and philosophy have failed to supply, and are as unable to deal with in our time as in any previous age.

Thus nature and Christianity when rightly viewed become parts of one great plan of the creative mind, by which all apparent anomalies and failures in man and his natural allies will be finally resolved into mercy and justice, so that nature itself can be complete and perfect only in the final triumph of the Gospel of Christ.

If the universe around us thus testifies to

God and to his Messiah, and points to his revealed plan of salvation, may we not acquiesce in the conclusion of Paul in his great argument in the beginning of his letter to the Romans, that if we shut our eyes to this testimony we shall be "without excuse."

CHAPTER V.

ANSWERS FROM EXPERIENCE.

BY A. J. GORDON, D.D.

§ 56. *Conversion a Miracle.* The value of experience as a witness to the truth of Christianity can hardly be exaggerated. The theologian Vinet wrote powerfully in defense of the faith, and there are more pungent, telling, quotable sentences in his works for one who is selecting arrows for the Gospel warfare than in almost any recent writer with whom we are acquainted. But why is it that the following paragraph is likely to be more frequently cited than anything which he has written? "The greatest miracle that I know of is that of my conversion. I was dead and I live; I was blind and I see; I was a slave and I am free; I was an enemy of God and I love him; prayer, the Bible, the society of Christians—these were to me a source of profound *ennui*; whilst now it is the pleasures of the world that are a weariness to me, and piety is the source of all my joy. Behold the miracle! and if God has been

able to work that one, there are none of which he is not capable.”

§ 57. *The Strongest Answer.* If the force of this powerful confession be analyzed it will be found to lie in two elements—the experimental character of the evidence which it conveys, and the supernatural character of the experience which it records. To have been the witness of a miracle constitutes a great qualification for defending Christianity; but to have been the subject of a miracle constitutes a greater qualification. And such is the position of one who has been regenerated, and who has learned in his own life what it is to be delivered from the tendencies of an evil human nature, and to be made subject to the powerful impulse of the divine nature implanted by the Holy Spirit. In a word, conversion is the strongest, most universal and most polyglot evidence of Christianity which the Church can present to the world. Neander calls it “the greatest of all miracles; the standing miracle of the age”; and because this witness to Christ is a perpetual one, not to be remanded to the apostolic age, like the miracles of healing and resurrection, wrought by our Lord and his disciples; not to be thrown forward into the advent age like the universal rising of the dead at our Lord’s coming, but one of present and everyday occurrence, it has a

more practical and immediate value in dealing with objectors than any which can be employed.

§ 58. *Paul's Experience.* Biblical example and personal observation bear the same testimony as to the usefulness of this miracle of conversion for proving the truth of the Gospel. Paul was no mean logician, as his great epistles show, and he was no unskilled expositor of Scripture, as is evidenced especially by his sermon in the synagogue at Antioch of Pisidia; but when in the most critical exegesis of his ministry he was compelled to bear Christ's name "before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel," it is noticeable how constantly he avails himself of this weapon of personal experience, reiterating again and again the story of his arrest and conversion on the way to Damascus. And this method is not less effectual to-day. Augustine describes the divine order for every age when he declares that "Christ did not select orators to catch the fishermen, but fishermen to catch orators." The orator confident in his learning and eloquence will employ what he regards as his most skillful weapon. The fisherman who has heard his Lord's voice calling him to leave his nets and follow him, and who has seen his Lord walking on the sea and calming the waves thereof, will use the only resource of which he is master,

and in commending his Lord, will say, "that which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." The latter method, though regarded as weak and contemptible by the wise and prudent, has often so wrought as to prove the "irresistible might of weakness."

§ 59. *The Converted Drunkard.* We remember the long and useless toil we bestowed some years ago in trying to help a thoughtful and cultivated man out of the slough of skepticism into which he had fallen through overmuch scientific speculation. When compelled to give over the case we urged him to come into a prayer-meeting and listen to the story of a converted drunkard, who from the most desperate ruin had been instantly lifted into sobriety and peace of conscience and domestic happiness by simple faith in Christ. His testimony, confirmed by several years of unshaken steadfastness of conduct, carried the day with the doubter. "Here," he exclaimed, "is something I cannot gainsay," and now he is as firm in his faith as before he was fixed in his doubt. Be sure that the narrator tells the literal truth, as in this instance an entire church could testify; and here is an evidence of Christianity more simple, more palpable, and more obvious than any that can be produced. For the trans-

formation is so radical as to be as distinctly marked as the time on the face of the town-clock—the total inversion of attitude from downward to upward; the visible change of impulse from sensual to spiritual; the transition from defeat to victory, from useless striving to keep from falling, to quiet rest in being kept.

§ 60. *Spiritual Life.* It is observable that most of our theologians do not dissent from the statements of Vinet and Neander above quoted, in which they call conversion a miracle, while they take issue at once with the assumption that physical miracles occur in our day. If we could keep our minds on the original meaning of miracle, and regard it as a “sign” rather than a “wonder”; an evidence of divine love rather than an infraction of natural law, we should be less embarrassed in admitting its present possibility. Professor Christlieb in an original and unique discussion of miracles emphasizes the natural character of such works as against their alleged unnatural or anti-natural character. In a world where the universal rule is that men pass from life into death, it seems unnatural and therefore incredible that at the voice of the Son of Man one should return from death to life by rising from the grave. Yet life is the normal condition of man, and

death the abnormal. Ought we to be staggered at regeneration in which by the operation of God's Spirit one passes "from death unto life," since it is simply a restoration of the primitive relation of the soul to God? Ought the recovery of a sick person in answer to prayer to be considered incredible, since health is the orderly and right condition of the body, and sickness its disordered and wrong condition? Or, to carry the inquiry a step further, ought the resurrection of a dead body to be regarded as an infraction of the laws of nature when it is really the reassertion of a law which has been suspended through man's sin?

Now we know of no evidence that the third in this series of supernatural works—the raising of the dead—occurs in our day, and we know of no promise in the Gospel to warrant its expectation. But in regard to the second, the healing of the body, as in regard to the first—the regeneration of the soul—the word of the Lord is explicit, "They shall lay their hands on the sick, and they shall recover;" "The prayer of faith shall save the sick." In this realm, therefore, we concur in the opinion of Professor Christlieb that miracles are to be expected, and probably occur in our own day.

§ 61. *Personal Experiences.* And what of their evidential importance? We reply by cit-

ing examples within personal knowledge. The confirmed opium habit is conceded to be one of the most hopeless and desperate forms of self-imposed disease with which medical skill is called to deal. The writer has been witness to two instances of the instantaneous and absolute cure of this malady in answer to prayer and by the exercise of a personal faith in Jesus Christ. In each instance the case of the sufferer had been pronounced hopeless after treatment by many physicians; and the cure of each has been proved by long trial, in the one instance extending over seventeen years, and in the other over ten. The first cure occurred in connection with Mr. Moody's evangelistic services in the city of Boston. With a plain, common-sense apprehension of the value of experimental testimony, the eminent evangelist put the healed man upon the stand night after night, to tell the story of his deliverance to the multitudes, and with the result of bringing conviction and hope to scores of enslaved sinners of all kinds. Wherein now lay the strength of this kind of testimony? In its clear palpable exhibition of a fact! Experience is the plain man's logic. Simple minds who cannot grasp a syllogism or connect the major and the minor premises of a rational proposition, can at once realize the force of the

confession—"One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see." The humblest and most illiterate Christian can be a positive philosopher in handling the deep things of God. The blind man's creed is evermore the new man's confession, "One thing I know."

"We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." "And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us." "Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us because he hath given us of his Spirit." "Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord"—and while the metaphysician is proving by logic, and the scientist by chemical tests, and the rationalist by induction, the believer goes straight to the heart of the matter, and proves God by knowing him in his own heart, and recognizing him by his outstretched hand.

CHAPTER VI.

ANSWERS FROM THE GROWTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY EDWIN W. RICE, D.D.

I. EARLY GROWTH.

§ 62. *In View of the Obstacles to be Overcome.*
How hopeless, to all human view, was the attempt to introduce Christianity into the world, in the face of the long-existing and cherished forms of worship! It must confront and overcome Judaism, the powerful religious systems of heathenism, the proud intellectual philosophy of the Greeks, the ambitious pantheism of the Roman, and the superstitions and vices that everywhere ruled the Oriental mind.

These obstacles were not to be overcome by compromise, but by completely conquering them. Yet this was not to be accomplished by physical force, nor by mere intellectual acumen, but by a forceful though peaceful mastery, through persuading them to embrace loftier moral and spiritual conceptions of God, of man, of man's duty to God, of man's duty to man, and of the duties of nations toward one another.

Other wide-spread religions might make progress by concessions and compromises, by mixing their teachings and forms of worship with those which they would overcome. And they might push their conquests of faith by force, by bribery, or by the sophistries of philosophy. But Christianity could advance by neither of these methods without destroying itself.

"But the true God is a jealous God," as Bacon long ago observed, "and therefore his worship and religion will endure no mixture nor partner." Thus Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me" (Matt. 12 : 30), and again "He that is not against us is for us" (Luke 9 : 50), implying that the fundamental unity and substance of his religion lay in acting loyally and truly for and with him. Christianity was inflexibly opposed to all forms of vice, of error, and of false religions. If it had been conciliatory, or compromising, it might have escaped persecution. But its claim to exclusive divine authority, and for implicit obedience as against the claims of all others for service, aroused the sharpest opposition in every quarter where it was proclaimed.

§ 63. *Judaism an Obstacle.* The doctrines of Christianity were exceedingly offensive to the leaders of the Jews in the time of Christ. The apparently humble origin and the ignominious

death of Jesus on the cross they could not reconcile with their universal and splendid hopes of a Messiah who should lead them to temporal conquest and glory, and then sit upon the ancient throne of David as the great temporal King of nations. But this was not all. To the Jews, the teaching of Christ and of his apostles was essentially a "new doctrine." It might have some basis in Mosaic and Jewish teachings, but it required them to change their worship, abandon their temple, and revolutionize their creed. (See Stephen's speech, Acts 7.)

This point is thus ably stated by Dr. R. S. Storrs: "The Jew crosses a chasm, he does not merely ascend by steps from one court to another, in coming to Christ. The boy Mendel becomes the Neander—the veritable 'new man,' when baptized to the Lord."

"It is hard to conceive," he continues, "how any demonstration of any fact could be furnished in history, more complete than that which is thus given, by the Hebrews themselves, to the fact that Christianity, as it stands in the New Testament, is not a mere flowering into larger proportion and lovelier beauty of the religion which they possessed. I cannot but feel that the more carefully and profoundly one studies the system, the clearer and the deeper will be his conviction that in this they were right.

The later religion was in a true sense based on the earlier, and presupposed by it. . . . But they [the symbols of the earlier] take illustration and importance from it, not it from them. And there is no conceivable law of moral evolution, by inconsiderable variations, gradually established, and resulting at last, through constant increments, in a fixed and definite change of type, which can possibly account for the coming of Christianity out of Judaism." And Dr. Storrs adds, "If Christianity was not a development out of Judaism, assuredly it was not from any other religion known on the earth." * So Judaism imprisoned Peter, and sent Paul in chains to Rome. It beheaded James and banished John, as it had felt bound to crush and crucify Jesus the founder of Christianity. This strong religious prejudice and stubborn opposition Christianity, to make any progress, was compelled to overcome.

§ 64. *Grecian Philosophy an Obstacle.* The Greeks were the foremost of all the schools of philosophy. Their philosophy professed to have a wide range over religion and worship. Yet it was exceedingly narrow, arrogant, and corrupt as well as corrupting to morals. Read Paul's charges against even the Christians in Corinth, Athens, and other Greek cities (1 Cor.

*Divine Origin of Christianity, p. 338.

5 : 1 to 6 : 20 ; Acts 17 : 1 to 18 : 17). Even Socrates said, "It appears to me that the Athenians do not greatly care what sentiments a man holds, provided he keeps them to himself ; but if he attempts to instruct others then they are indignant." There was no positive, definite recognition of God in their philosophy. Their gods were represented as passionate, scheming, contentious, warring among themselves, and having little interest in man except from selfish motives, and offering small aid for the human race, present or future. Philosophy tried to stem the tide of vice and corruption that swept over society and religion, but an acute writer declares, "it was like trying to rear a fortress with paper walls, cemented by a vanishing breath." The proclamation of Christianity was "foolishness" to Greek philosophy.

Paul was "mocked," and called a "babbler" "a base fellow," and a proclaimer of some "strange demons," by the Stoical and Epicurean philosophers of Athens, which were the leading Greek schools of that day. Thus the religiousness of Judaism and the philosophy of the learned Greeks were mammoth obstacles barring the progress of Christianity. They must be overcome.

§ 65. *Heathen Worship as Obstacles.* Heathen temples were not neglected, but still

built and adorned with all the exquisite art, and with all the lavish gifts which combined learning, wealth, and wide popularity could bestow. Heathen religions and worship were by no means the worn-out effete systems which some writers have pictured them. Their power was dominant over the learned and the unlearned, over the rich and the poor, over the peasant and the prince. We can scarcely estimate how immense and overwhelming the influences were, nor how strongly these obstacles were entrenched against the progress of Christianity. We have a single glimpse at the fury of its opposition in the tremendous uproar at Ephesus, which suddenly filled the great theater, holding, as some say, 50,000 people, and turned this assembly into a howling mob shouting for the space of two hours, "Great is the Ephesian Diana." So jealous were the disciples of heathen religions of their faith that even Socrates was put to death for proposing to teach his countrymen better ideas concerning God, virtue, and religion. In that age, too, modern historical writers have taught us that, instead of heathen religions being in a decaying state, there had sprung up what might be termed a "Revival of Heathenism," a proclamation of the old forms of worship, as against the tendencies of the philosophical schools.

Heathenism was thus preparing to spread itself with new energy. This is thus eloquently described by Dr. Storrs: "The passions of men, which, in its divorce of morality from religion, were all fostered by heathenism, the sensual lusts, which for those who were ensnared by them, it hallowed and honored as a service to the gods; the cruelty, falsehood, and self-will, of which it exalted the patrons to the heavens, and made its divinities the most signal examples—all these, not less than the more gentle sentiments, were the allies of its might now aroused for its defense. To assail it was to start these multiform, envenomed, and many-fanged passions to the deadliest resistance: so that Paul well knew what history had shown, and what history afterward more fearfully illustrated, that when the hour of contest came there was no weapon in all the armory of human craft and human rage that would not be enlisted on the side of these religions; that the shouting amphitheater would be stilled before the agonies of those torn by their beasts; that the darkness of night would be lurid with the glare of their pitch-robed and burning victims." * Against this fearful obstacle must Christianity make headway, if it gained a living foothold in the world. Its

* Sermon on Missions.

disciples with its propagators were to become a spectacle for amusement, a gladiatorial show for Roman statesmen, for Grecian priests and women, being

“Butchered to make a Roman holiday.”

In the face of these mighty obstacles, Christianity had such a marvelous growth in the early centuries of the Christian era, that in four centuries it had swept over the entire Roman Empire, and had become the prevailing religion of civilization.

§ 66. *Obstacles in the Vices of Society.* The condition of morals in the Roman Empire at the advent of Christianity was so horrible that some writers are unwilling to describe it. The picture is too revolting to exhibit. Gibbon says: “Every virtue and even vice acquired its deity . . . the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind . . . almost every reign is closed with the same disgusting repetition of treason and murder.” (*Decline and Fall*, vol. 1.)

“The nobles and emperors themselves,” says Tholuck, “set the most corrupting examples.” The depravity and madness of Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, and Caracalla were due to the universal spirit of cruelty and vice that

prevailed among the people. The masses—peasant, prince, soldier, senator, and citizen—were foully tainted, were morally rotten, or the monstrous enormities and crimes of these notoriously vicious tyrants could never have been committed. Professedly cultured and refined women witnessed the most revolting shows of brutality, and delighted in beholding and in criticising the ferocious skill of gladiators, and swordsmen, and in patronizing the deadly contests in the amphitheater or the battles with tigers and lions in which the human victims were often torn limb from limb. The Roman masters put their aged slaves on desolate islands to perish, or would drown them in their fish-ponds to feed their fish.

These vices were not merely grained into the life of the common people, they were inculcated by the example of the highest classes, and often sanctioned by the spirit and the letter of their laws. Solon the lawgiver and one of the greatest of Greek sages gave parents permission by law to kill their children. Aristotle thought it should be encouraged by magistrates. Plato favored the same inhuman doctrine. It is true that the laws of Thebes at one time forbade the practice, but the philosophers supported the custom, and not this law, by their arguments. Plutarch commends At-

talus for exposing or murdering all his own children so that the crown of Pergamus should fall to the son of his brother Eumenes. Murder, or homicide, was justified by the wisest philosophers as well as by the emperors and princes. Cicero and Seneca advocated suicide, Brutus and Cassius both defended and practiced it, so did Cato, and he is praised by Plutarch for killing himself! As Paul declares they were "without natural affection." The proud Roman and the polite Greek alike allowed the destruction of new-born infants. The abandoning of one's child to hunger and the wild beasts was justified and the cruel act passed without blame or censure. Quintillian says of the philosophers they "conceal the most vicious lives under an austere look and singularity of dress." All these crimes and the state of society where they festered, and the depraved hearts out of which they sprang, were formidable obstacles to Christianity. Yet in the first century Pliny says "this superstition" [as he calls Christianity] "had seized not cities only, but the less towns also, and the open country," so that "heathen temples were almost forsaken." And Justin Martyr testifies, soon after Pliny, "There is not a nation, either Greek or barbarian . . . among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered to the Father, the

Creator of the Universe, by the name of the crucified Jesus."

II. RECENT GROWTH.

THE marvelous growth of Christianity in the nineteenth century is also one of the strongest proofs that it is the true religion. The manner of this growth and its beneficial effects upon society and the world are conspicuous and irrefutable arguments for Christianity as the religion of the true God, fitted for all mankind.

§ 67. *Manner of its Growth.* Other religions in other ages have, indeed, had a wonderful growth, but they have conquered peoples by brute force, as Mohammedanism subdued nations by the sword; or they have led men to believe that existence was wretchedness, and that the easiest, if not the only, escape from it, was individual annihilation in the universal sum of being, as in Buddhism.

Over against these types of Oriental religions. Christianity is heralded as the religion of peace. It gained followers not by the sword but by reason, by looking for joy not in annihilation but through immortal life. Other religions might allow free indulgence of man's passions and appetites; or might count it great holiness to afflict one's self. But Christianity

forbid the one, and did not credit the other with any merit.

It positively required truth, integrity, love to man and to God. And when man felt unable to render these truly, it offered divine mercy through Christ to forgive the past, and divine power to change his moral nature henceforth, thus demanding the deepest moral change in man, and promising the highest joy of heaven at the end.

§ 68. *Growth over Man's Nature.* But this was going contrary to the tendency of man in all history. The growth of Christianity on such a line, is the most marvelous fact in human history.*

The change it required in man was not merely in outward habits. The moral reformation of his nature which Christianity effects, recreates his whole being: his words, his acts, his thoughts, his motives. From centering upon self, his life centers upon Christ and for others. Growth of a religion that required so

* "The continual and steady growth of Christianity, its vigorous life in spite of various seasons of unavoidable ebb, and notwithstanding the presence of all these and other sources of corruption, and its continual rejuvenescence, are no ordinary proof of its divine origin as well as of its supreme fitness for the position in the world which it claims to occupy." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 9th Edn., Art. Christianity.

radical a revolution in man's nature would necessarily be slow, even if it should succeed in making any headway among heathen peoples.

§ 69. *Growth in Organized Mission Work.* The increase of organized efforts for the spread of Christianity is a marked characteristic of our age. The past century has been one of remarkable activity in the formation of missionary societies, Sunday-schools, Bible societies, Christian associations, temperance societies, and the founding of hospitals, homes for the aged and infirm, reformatories and a multitude of similar organizations for the alleviation of human suffering, want, and woe.

In foreign missions alone the gain of the century has been marvelous. In 1792 there was one missionary society with an annual income of about \$400. Fifty years later there were 27 such societies with an annual income of about \$3,000,000. Within one hundred years from one society for foreign missions the number was 280 with an annual income and expenditure of upwards of \$15,000,000.

At the beginning of the century at least one thousand millions of the human race were virtually inaccessible to the Christian missionary. The islands of the Pacific, so far as known, were in such depths of barbarism and cruelty, that it was facing death for any Christian to

land upon their shores. Now 27 groups are under control of Christian governments, the Gospel has peacefully conquered these dark peoples, and all are accessible to Christianity, as the result of organized mission work.*

Japan banished Roman Catholic missions in 1614 and closed its doors to foreigners, but they were opened in 1859. Korea was so closely sealed as to be called the "Hermit Nation," but in 1884 its doors were opened to the Christian missionary and traveler.

China was closed until 1842 when five sea-ports were opened, but Christian foreigners were excluded from the interior. In 1860 the whole empire was practically opened to the Gospel. In 1800 the Bible existed in 47 languages of the world. Now the entire Bible is circulated in 90 languages, and large portions are translated into 240 other dialects and languages, so that it is known to 500,000,000 of the human race, and could now be read by nine-tenths of the peoples of the world.†

The growth of Sunday-schools is another marvelous indication of the power of Christianity. They reveal the spirit of it, in training

* See Dennis, "Foreign Missions after a Century," pp. 300-320.

† Dorchester, *Problem of Religious Progress*, Rev. ed. p. 666.

the youths to principles of rectitude and to habits of integrity and religion, in a sphere where other forms of worship are extremely deficient, or offer no help.

Modern Sunday-schools are a Christian product of the nineteenth century. At the beginning of the century about 500,000 were under religious instruction in these schools, in 1825 there were 1,250,000 enrolled in them. In 1851 the number in the Sunday-schools of the world was upwards of 6,000,000. The last report of the International Sunday-school Convention gave the enrolled numbers as follows :

	SCHOOLS.	MEMBERS.
United States and British		
American Provinces,	142,089	13,033,175
For the World,	234,750	23,850,000

§ 70. *Effects of the Growth.* Wherever Christianity gained followers, the fruits of it were the fruits of love. The aged, the sick, the infirm were no longer left to die of neglect, but were speedily gathered into Christian hospitals, asylums, and homes and tenderly provided for with loving care.

The islands of the Pacific have been the scene of the most magnificent results of the growth of Christianity. That native tribes, or whole nations, should change their religion in

a generation may not be an unknown event in history. But that cannibals like the Fiji Islanders should become civilized and enlightened Christian worshipers in a single generation, that the Sandwich Islanders should in half a century be uplifted from heathen savagery to be recognized as a highly civilized people through Christian missions; that the greater portion of Polynesia, with its 12,000 islands wholly given to paganism of the most hideous character, should become civilized and largely Christianized in a single century, is a marvel, a miracle of divine power.

In Madagascar, in regions of Africa utterly unknown to the civilized world a generation ago, a similar marvelous physical, mental, and moral uplifting of great nations is going on by this singular growth and power of Christianity.

Through this influence Japan and China have suddenly sprung to the front, to gain recognition among the great nations of the world.

§ 71. *Gain in Religious Education.* Of 26 English barons who signed the Magna Charta only three wrote their names, and 23 made their marks. It is scarcely 350 years since British peers in the House of Lords were excused from service in Parliament, because they were unable to write, or to read. The progress of

popular education in the past three centuries has been chiefly due to evangelical Christian influences.

The interest in public education was never so great as now. Every Christian state spends vast sums annually in sustaining schools for the people. Especially is this true in Protestant countries. Not only are the governments deeply interested in promoting intelligence and all forms of useful knowledge, but private enterprise and benevolence are widely devoted to a similar end.

A careful record of gifts of \$5,000 and upwards to colleges and schools from private sources was kept for a few years. In the United States alone these gifts were in 1893 upwards of \$29,000,000, in 1894 they were \$52,000,000, and in 1895 nearly \$53,000,000, showing a steady increase in the face of the depressed financial conditions of the country. These large benefactions contribute to the instruction of the people in literature and in the useful arts.

In Great Britain in the present generation, there has been a steady gain in attendance on government schools from about 1,500,000 in 1872 to over 5,500,000 yearly, with the closing five years of the century.

There has been a corresponding decrease in

extreme poverty and pauperism in England. Half a century ago in 1850 the average of paupers was one for every 20 inhabitants. In the last decade of this century the average of paupers in England so far yearly has been reduced to one in every 39 of its population.

The number of criminal convictions in Great Britain annually in 1840 was one in every 700 of its population. In 1890 it was one for every 3000 of its inhabitants.

§ 72. *Facts of Christianity's Growth.* The numbers added to Christian disciples in apostolic times are commonly regarded as wonderful, and considering the adverse influences they were wonderful. Yet the members won to Christianity in the last decade of this century were more than double the largest estimated number of Christian disciples gained during the whole of the first century of the Christian era.

The progress of Christianity during the past four centuries has been more than four times as great as its progress for the preceding fourteen centuries.

The estimated number of Christians as given by Sharon Turner, Prof. Schem, and other statisticians at different periods is as follows :

End of 1st Century.....	500,000 Christians
End of 5th Century.....	15,000,000 ,,
End of 10th Century.....	50,000,000 ,,
End of 15th Century....	100,000,000 ,,
End of 18th Century.....	200,000,000 ,,
End of 19th Century.....	500,000,000 ,,

Thus during the 19th century over six times-as many disciples have been added to Christianity, as were gained to it during the first century. At the beginning of the 19th century, China, Japan, and most of Asia and Africa were closed to the free spread of the Gospel. Since 1850 all the nations of the East have been opened to the Gospel except Thibet. In Africa 110,000,000 of the 160,000,000 of its inhabitants are now under the control of Christian governments.

The total population of the world is variously computed from 1,350,000,000 to 1,500,000,000.

The portion of the inhabitants of the globe under Christian governments is now ninefold what it was four centuries ago, as the following table shows.

UNDER CHRISTIAN GOVERNMENTS.

In 1500 A. D.	100,000,000 people
In 1700 ,, 	155,000,000 ,,
In 1830 ,, 	388,000,000 ,,
In 1897 ,, 	890,000,000 ,,

All around the world, Christian people are rapidly gaining influence and the ascendancy. And with that rising ascendancy the darkness is disappearing, and the great daydawn of the kingdom of God will appear.

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